Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-16 (Cancelled).

17. (New) A head slider comprising:

an air inlet end;

an air outlet end;

a disk inner edge side;

a disk outer edge side; and

a front surface for opposing a disk-shaped recording medium, said front surface including:

a positive pressure generating section;

a flotation improving section arranged to oppose the disk-shaped recording medium, said flotation improving section confronting said positive pressure generating section;

a negative pressure generating recess between said positive pressure generating section and said flotation improving section;

a head for performing at least one of a recording operation and a playback operation on the disk-shaped recording medium, said head being fixed at a downstream side of said flotation improving section; and

a sloped face at both lateral sides of said head, and extending from a downstream side of said negative pressure generating recess to at least one of said air outlet end, said disk inner edge side, and said disk outer edge side, and being arranged such that a distance from the disk-shaped recording medium to said sloped face is gradually larger from an air inlet side of said sloped face toward an air outlet side of said sloped face when said head slider is steadily afloat over the disk-shaped recording medium.

18. (New) The head slider of claim 17, wherein said positive pressure generating section comprises:

two side rails each spaced a predetermined distance from each of said disk inner edge side and said disk outer edge side, and each extending along a longitudinal axis of said head slider toward said air outlet end; and

a cross rail having a main portion spaced a predetermined distance from said air inlet end and arranged perpendicular to the air flow direction, each end of said cross rail being connected to a respective one of said two side rails; and

wherein said negative pressure generating recess comprises a lower-level face at a lower level than a face of said positive pressure generating section, and is surrounded by said positive pressure generating section and said flotation improving section; and

wherein said flotation improving section is separated from said positive pressure generating section by said negative pressure generating recess, and is located at a laterally-central portion of said front surface at said air outlet end.

19. (New) The head slider of claim 18, wherein said sloped face is a planar face extending from said downstream side of said negative pressure generating recess to said air outlet end.

20. (New) The head slider of claim 18, wherein said sloped face is a curved face extending from a downstream side of said negative pressure generating recess to at least one of said air outlet end, said disk inner edge side, and said disk outer edge side.

21. (New) The head slider of claim 17, wherein said sloped face is a planar face extending from said downstream side of said negative pressure generating recess to said air outlet end.

22. (New) The head slider of claim 17, wherein said sloped face is a curved face extending from a downstream side of said negative pressure generating recess to at least one of said air outlet end, said disk inner edge side, and said disk outer edge side.

23. (New) The head slider of claim 17, wherein said flotation improving section confronts said positive pressure generating section so as to be located downstream of said positive pressure generating section and at a laterally-central portion of said front face.

24. (New) The head slider of claim 23, wherein said sloped face comprises an inner sloped face portion located at an inner-edge side of said flotation improving section, and comprises an outer sloped face portion located at an outer-edge side of said flotation improving section.

25. (New) The head slider of claim 17, wherein said flotation improving section is located so as to divide said sloped face into an inner sloped face portion located at an inner-edge side of said flotation improving section, and an outer sloped face portion located at an outer-edge side of said flotation improving section.

26. (New) The head slider of claim 17, wherein said positive pressure generating section comprises a high-level face and said negative pressure generating recess comprises a low-level face.

27. (New) The head slider of claim 26, wherein said flotation improving section comprises a positive pressure improving face at a level in the same geometric plane as said high-level face of said positive pressure generating section, and comprises an intermediate level face at a level between said high-level face of said positive pressure generating section and said low-level face of said negative pressure generating recess.

28. (New) The head slider of claim 17, wherein said front surface further includes a through-hole extending from said negative pressure generating recess to at least one of said disk inner edge side and said disk outer edge side.

29. (New) The head slider of claim 28, wherein said positive pressure generating section comprises:

two side rails each spaced a predetermined distance from each of said disk inner edge side and said disk outer edge side, and each extending along a longitudinal axis of said head slider toward said air outlet end; and

a cross rail having a main portion spaced a predetermined distance from said air inlet end and arranged perpendicular to the air flow direction, each end of said cross rail being connected to a respective one of said two side rails; and

wherein said negative pressure generating recess comprises a lower-level face at a lower level than a face of said positive pressure generating section, and is surrounded by said positive pressure generating section and said flotation improving section; and

wherein said flotation improving section is separated from said positive pressure generating section by said negative pressure generating recess, and is located at a laterally-central portion of said front surface at said air outlet end.

30. (New) The head slider of claim 28, wherein said sloped face is a planar face extending from said downstream side of said negative pressure generating recess to said air outlet end.

31. (New) The head slider of claim 28, wherein said sloped face is a curved face extending from a downstream side of said negative pressure generating recess to at least one of said air outlet end, said disk inner edge side, and said disk outer edge side.

32. (New) A disk drive comprising:

a disk-shaped recording medium;

a driver for rotating said disk-shaped recording medium;

a suspension mechanism operable to swing around a bearing portion; and

a head slider attached to a distal end of said suspension mechanism such that said head slider opposes said disk-shaped recording medium during rotation of said disk-shaped recording medium, and such that said head slider is held at a retreat position when a rotation of said disk is stopped, said head slider including:

an air inlet end;

an air outlet end;

a disk inner edge side;

a disk outer edge side; and

a front surface for opposing said disk-shaped recording medium, said front surface including:

a positive pressure generating section;

a flotation improving section arranged to oppose said disk-shaped recording medium, said flotation improving section confronting said positive pressure generating section;

a negative pressure generating recess between said positive pressure generating section and said flotation improving section;

a head for performing at least one of a recording operation and a playback operation on said disk-shaped recording medium, said head being fixed at a downstream side of said flotation improving section; and

a sloped face at both lateral sides of said head, and extending from a downstream side of said negative pressure generating recess to at least one of said air outlet end, said disk inner edge side, and said disk outer edge side, and being arranged such that a distance from said disk-shaped recording medium to said sloped face is gradually larger from an air inlet side of said sloped face toward an air outlet side of said sloped face when said head slider is steadily afloat over said disk-shaped recording medium.

33. (New) The disk drive of claim 32, wherein said positive pressure generating section comprises:

two side rails each spaced a predetermined distance from each of said disk inner edge side and said disk outer edge side, and each extending along a longitudinal axis of said head slider toward said air outlet end; and

a cross rail having a main portion spaced a predetermined distance from said air inlet end and arranged perpendicular to the air flow direction, each end of said cross rail being connected to a respective one of said two side rails; and

wherein said negative pressure generating recess comprises a lower-level face at a lower level than a face of said positive pressure generating section, and is surrounded by said positive pressure generating section and said flotation improving section; and

wherein said flotation improving section is separated from said positive pressure generating section by said negative pressure generating recess, and is located at a laterally-central portion of said front surface at said air outlet end.

34. (New) The disk drive of claim 32, wherein said sloped face is a planar face extending from said downstream side of said negative pressure generating recess to said air outlet end.

35. (New) The disk drive of claim 32, wherein said sloped face is a curved face extending from a downstream side of said negative pressure generating recess to at least one of said air outlet end, said disk inner edge side, and said disk outer edge side.

36. (New) The disk drive of claim 32, wherein said flotation improving section is located so as to divide said sloped face into an inner sloped face portion located at an inner-edge side of said flotation improving section, and an outer sloped face portion located at an outer-edge side of said flotation improving section.